

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

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DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

A. GENERAL

The need for and the extent of mail control will vary with the requirements of each office of the Agency. This system is considered to be the one most generally applicable and its installation with necessary adaptations is advocated in all offices which have a mail control requirement. The system will accomplish the following specific objectives: provide a means for tracing and locating correspondence in process; provide a follow-up on unanswered correspondence; serve as a log and record of actions taken; and serve as a finding media for filed correspondence.

B. DETERMINING THE EXTENT OF CONTROL

1. It should be borne in mind that controls mean extra work and should be applied only if considered worth the additional cost. The worth must be measured in terms of the need to quickly locate correspondence; time saved in searching for correspondence in process or filed; and the prevention of delays in answering correspondence.
2. By discussion with Office Heads, Administrative Officers and Division Chiefs, Area Records Officers should first determine the extent of control desired stated in terms of specific objectives. In some offices, no control except the usual book logs may be necessary while others may require as complete control as possible. Upon determining the extent of control desired, the Area Records Officer, with assistance from the Records Management Staff as needed, should adapt the procedure outlined in this handbook to meet the special requirements of the office.
3. After determining how much of a control is desired, next decide what is to be controlled. It is rarely necessary to control all material transmitted through the mail. Therefore, a review should be made of material handled by the registry to clearly establish what should and what should not be put into the control system.

C. LOCATION OF CONTROL RESPONSIBILITY

The control and routing of incoming communications should be at the point of receipt and dispatch. In most instances, this will be the records unit or registry with subsidiary control points at the Division level.

D. CONTROL PROCEDURES

1. This procedure provides for the accomplishment of all of the objectives of a mail control system. Special adaptations will be required to eliminate unwanted features and because of varying conditions such as number and qualification of personnel available for control work; number of personnel served; and physical location of the organizational units.

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

D. CONTROL PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)

2. Upon receipt in the registry of incoming communications to be controlled, assign a control number and record on Form 235, Document Control, as follows:
 - a. Stamp the control number in the lower right corner of the incoming communication and type it in "Control No." block of Form 238.
 - b. Enter the security classification of the document in the space designated "Sec. Cl."
 - c. Enter the name of the individual, business firm or organization from whom the correspondence was received, in the block designated "Origin."
 - d. Enter the date of the correspondence in the space designated "Date of Rec."
 - e. Enter the date the communication was received in block designated "Date Rec'd."
 - f. Enter the date action is due to be completed in space designated "Suspense Date."
 - g. Enter a brief digest of the subject matter involved in the incoming correspondence in the space designated "Subj." and indicate the number of enclosures. If the incoming communication is a telegram, registered letter, or other special type communication, make an appropriate notation in this same space.
 - h. Note Subsidiary Mail Control to whom the correspondence is forwarded for handling and the date forwarded in the "Date Out" column.
3. Make the following disposition of the six part form:
 - a. Detach copies numbered 2 and 3 immediately and file in the Central Mail Control. (See attached flow chart.)
 - b. Number 2 copy - file alphabetically/chronologically by the name of the individual, firm or organization, from whom the communication was received. This file constitutes an alphabetical source index and with the routing indication will serve as the finding media of all recorded incoming communications in process.

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

D. CONTROL PROCEDURE (CONTINUED)

3. c. Number 3 copy - File by the date on which action is due to be completed (See Paragraph 5) to act as a suspense copy and serve as a log. Maintain this file in two parts "Action Completed" and "Incompleted." Place the suspense copy in the "Incompleted" file and use to follow up communications on which action has not been completed within the time established for follow ups to be made. When action has been completed withdraw the suspense copy from the "Incompleted" file and place in the "Action Completed" file by control number.
4. Securely fasten copies numbered 1, 4, 5 and 6 to the upper left corner of the correspondence and forward to the Subsidiary Mail Control point shown in the routing column.
4. Upon receipt by the Subsidiary Control Point Mail Clerk, refer the communication to the proper action desk and note the referral in the "Routing-Date Sent" column. At the time of referral detach the number 4 copy and file by date action is due to be completed. Use for a suspense file as described for copy #3. Note any later referrals on this copy so that it will provide information as to the location of the communication when requests concerning it are received. When the #4 copy has served its purpose as a suspense file, use it as a finding media by noting the file classification in the block designated "Cross Reference or Point of Filing," and file it alphabetically by the name of the organization from which received.
5. Copy number 5 is used by the first Subsidiary Control Point if the correspondence is further referred to another Subsidiary Mail Control within the Office. At the time of the referral detach the #5 copy, note the referral reference in the "Routing-Date Sent" column, and return the slip to the Central Mail Control. The Central Mail Control transcribes the transfer information to the number 3 copy and destroys copy number 5. The second Subsidiary Mail Control point to which the correspondence is referred removes copy number 6 and files it as its control copy. If additional referrals are necessary the referring control point prepares another set of copies 4, 5 and 6 of Para 230.
6. Copy number 1 remains with the communication until all necessary action has been taken and the correspondence is returned to Central Mail Control. At this point remove and destroy copies 5 and 6 if still attached, indicating that a second referral was not required. The Central Mail Control records in the "Cross Reference or Point of Filing" space of copy number 1 the subject classification of the correspondence to be filed. Use copy #1 to replace copy number 2 in the alphabetical source name file and file the #2 copy by date of dispatch as the outgoing log. Copy number 1 serves as a finding media for correspondence that cannot be located immediately in the subject file.

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

D. CONTROL PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)

6. (Continued) If the correspondence is retained for filing and dispatch of the reply by the Subsidiary Mail Control, detach copy number 1 from the correspondence, place the subject classification in the block designated "Cross Reference or Point of Filing note action taken in the proper block and make the following notation on the Form 238 "Retained by _____." Forward copy number 1 to the Central Mail Control for filing. (See attached flow chart.)
7. For intra-office correspondence initiated within the Office, which must be controlled, the procedure below applies. The originator prepares Form 238 as follows:
 - a. Types security classification of the document in the designated space - "Sec. Cl."
 - b. Enters the name of the Division preparing the communication in the space designated "Origin."
 - c. Types the date of the correspondence in the block designated "Date of Doc."
 - d. Includes in the space designated "Subject" a brief digest of the subject matter involved in the communication.
 - e. Notes the initial referral (to the Central Mail Control) in the "Routing-Date Sent" column.
8. The Subsidiary Mail Control detaches and files copy number 4 chronologically, attaching copies 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 to the communication which is forwarded to the Central Mail Control.
9. Upon receipt the Central Mail Control:
 - a. Assigns a control number to the communication and the Form 238
 - b. Notes the date received in the space designated "Date Rec'd."
 - c. Types the date action is due to be completed in the space designated "Suspense Date."
 - d. Detaches and files copies 2 and 3 as explained in Paragraphs B3b and c.
 - e. Forwards communication with copies 1, 5 and 6 attached, to Subsidiary Mail Control point noted in "Routing-Date Sent" column.

DOCUMENT CONTROL PROCEDURE

D. CONTROL PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)

10. Check the suspense file in the Central Mail Control daily. Upon expiration of the time allotted for action, contact the Subsidiary Mail Control to which the communication was referred to determine the reason for the delay. If additional time is needed note the new date due, as indicated by the action desk, on the suspense copy (Number 3 of Form 238)
11. To insure successful operation of this procedure, it is essential that persons assigned mail control duties be instructed that this is a priority function. Make more than one person available for such duty at each control point to prevent the delay so often experienced in getting correspondence to action desks.

E. LOGGING CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

Form 238 Document Control, has been approved for use as a log for material classified as "confidential" through "secret." If used for mail control purposes, it should replace the book log and will save the time ordinarily required for their maintenance.

F. FINDING CORRESPONDENCE

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The Agency filing system as prescribed in the Handbook for Subject Filing, HR does not usually require the use of a supplemental finding medium. However, one such finding medium used when necessary is an alphabetical source name index with a notation of the subject heading under which the related correspondence is filed. Form 238 can readily be used as an alphabetical finding medium upon completion of the processing of related correspondence. The procedure for this is described in the paragraphs covering the use of Copies 1 and 4.

The alphabetical name index is particularly advantageous when the filing system is first installed and files personnel have not had an opportunity to become thoroughly indoctrinated. However, in such instances, the value of the name index file should be evaluated periodically and discontinued when found to be unnecessary.